



Flack, A. (2018). Continental creatures: animals in contemporary European history. *Contemporary European History*, 27(3), 517-529. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777318000036>

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Link to published version (if available):
[10.1017/S0960777318000036](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777318000036)

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‘Continental Creatures: Animals and History in Contemporary Europe’

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Biographical note:

Andrew Flack is a Teaching Fellow in Modern History at the University of Bristol. He has published on celebrity animals, the wild animal trade, nonhuman agency, animals in screen media, automobility and the English safari park. His first book, on the nature of human-animal relationships in zoos across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will be published by University of Virginia Press in late 2017. He is presently working on a projects relating to journeys into the wilds of above and below and on the historical complexions of human-animal hybrids.

Deborah Amberson and Elena Past (eds.) *Thinking Italian Animals: Human and Posthuman in Modern Italian Literature and Film* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 263 pages, £60, ISBN 978-1-137-45475-1

Louisa Mackenzie and Stephanie Posthumus (eds.) *French Thinking about Animals* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2015), 210 pages, £30, ISBN 978-1-61186-152-5.

Boria Sax, *Animals in the Third Reich, 2nd Edition* (Providence, RI: Yogn & Thorn, 2013), 215 pages, £10.59, ISBN 092255870-1

Frank Westerman, *Brother Mendel's Perfect Horse: man and Beast in an Age of Human Warfare*, trans by Sam Garrett (London: Vintage Books, 2013), 310 pages, £8.99, ISBN 978-0-099-51277-6

In Norse mythology Fenrir, a wolf God born of the God of fire, possessed so much power that he horrified the other gods. Restrained by a chain forged from elements of the earth — such as the breath of fish and the roots of mountains — his power was held in check so that it might not be unleashed across the realms of gods and men. The chains of his captivity appeared to be fragile but were in fact supernaturally robust, though his eventual catastrophic escape was foretold by oracles of the age.

This invocation of Norse mythology is how Boria Sax chooses to conclude his examination of animals in Nazi Germany, *Animals in the Third Reich* (163). He summons Fenrir for good reason: animals were

bound up in the life of the Nazi state and the wolf itself was a dynamic totem of National Socialist potency. Indeed, in some ways our enduring association of the skulking figure of the wolf in the woods and at the door with savagery and unrestrained animality parallels our perceptions of the Third Reich: an emblem of supposedly unfathomable horror and fascination.

More than that, however, the myth of Fenrir also points to the ubiquity of animals in human lives across time and space. *Canis lupus* has historically been understood as a complicated beast of both myth and matter; it was at once a creature of flesh and blood and an imagined being taking on forms beyond itself. A powerful symbol of avarice, greed, predation, and a genuine threat to the vitality of the livestock upon which so many communities depended for sustenance and income, the animal was relentlessly hunted and tortured so that, by the nineteenth century, it had largely disappeared from habitats across much of Europe. In Germany, the species had been rendered extinct by the time of the Nazi assumption of power.¹ Its alluring scarcity, in conjunction with the Northern European mythologies of which it was an intrinsic part, was one of the main reasons why the Nazi state was, in some respects, ahead of the curve: in 1934 it was the first state to introduce legislation to protect the species. Nonetheless, the middle decades of the twentieth century witnessed a rising sentimental response toward the same wild beasts that had, in previous years, been viewed as threatening to human life and livelihood. Species like *Canis lupus* transformed into objects of sympathy, if not reverence, their place in a fragile world in need of vehement, active protection. Thus, wolf conservation and recovery across Europe escalated after the 1950s as traditional pastoralist ways of life declined.²

The re-emergence of the wolf in habitats across large parts of Europe (though not yet, alas, in the United Kingdom) not coincidentally parallels the so-called 'animal turn' of the later decades of the twentieth century. Just as environmental history grew out of the environmentalist movements of the 1970s, Animal Studies initially emerged from, or rather was inspired by, the works of Peter Singer and Tom Regan among others, who drew attention to the ways in which animals were

exploited in the animal-industrial complex at the very heart of an increasing number of cultures across the globe (xvi).³ For so long considered as passive beings lurking in the background of an anthropocentric historical landscape, animals had been largely ignored as the foci of scholarship until the very end of the 1980s. That is not to say that animals had not featured in human histories before, of course. They had, though rarely for their own sakes. They were deployed as ciphers through which to explore changing notions of law and jurisprudence in E. P. Evans' wonderfully surprising *The Criminal Prosecution of Animals* (1906), for instance, or as icons of Parisian class conflict in a single chapter of Robert Darnton's masterful *The Great Cat Massacre* (1984).⁴ Not until the late 1980s, however, did historians begin to consider animals as legitimate subjects of historical enquiry in and of themselves. Harriet Ritvo's 1987 *The Animal Estate* remains the seminal piece of writing in the field, making a compelling case for the consideration of animals as emblems and, in some ways, as actors in nineteenth-century British lives.⁵

The field has grown exponentially and in multiple directions since Ritvo's intervention nearly three decades ago. Most conspicuously, animals have been viewed as emblems of human concerns — as representations or avatars. As Claude Lévi-Strauss so notably argued, animals are 'good to think [with]', and many scholars embraced this view, using the nonhuman as a means through which to understand broader human concerns like class, trade, and indeed, the very notion of 'humanity' itself.⁶ Animals *are* ciphers; there can be no doubt about that. They serve us as mirrors of nature-culture. This approach has proved itself to be dangerous as a singular mode of examining the place of animals in history, however, for it risks ignoring, even obliterating, the historical presence of real animals themselves. Animals — certainly mammals but also 'lower' creatures too, about which more later — are entities of flesh and blood, who each are capable of wielding physical influence in the world and who exist for their own sakes outside of the various spheres of human interest in which they are often made to dwell. They are much more than their representations in our cultures might have us believe.⁷

Many concerns of the field of animal history combine these material and semiotic approaches to animal lives in their entanglement with humans. Recent preoccupations — often crossing disciplinary boundaries in their attempt to embrace the reality of animal lives — include a consideration of the character of the human-animal rupture, notably the logic ordained by Judeo-Christian theology that there is an unbridgeable divide between humans and the animal world.⁸ Other concerns include the degree to which animals have really been able to wield agency in the past;⁹ and the sentimental and legal frameworks that embraced animal lives.¹⁰ One of the main strengths and, paradoxically, weaknesses of the field has been its relationship to an allied body of scholars engaged in the transdisciplinary field of Animal Studies. Animal Studies has infiltrated the academy through a variety of channels — through philosophy, geography, English literature, psychology, and law — and so the precise origins of animal history as a sub-field is a little unclear; scholars have engaged with the ‘animal turn’ from the perspective of cultural history, economic history, and environmental history.¹¹ Thus, Animal History and Animal Studies take in scholars and methodologies from across the humanities, social sciences, veterinary sciences, and more. This has led to the emergence of a rich body of work, but one that runs the risk of lacking cohesion and direction.

The four works that are the principal subject of this review essay — individually and as a body of scholarship — are each propelled and ensnared by the opportunities and pitfalls of this interdisciplinary frame. Each of them, to a greater or lesser degree, embraces the animal as representation, as fleshy beast, as mirror to human identity, as object of intense affection, as philosophical subject, and as scientific specimen. In what lies ahead I assess the major contributions of each piece (while necessarily leaving much aside) before proceeding to offer thoughts for future scholarly endeavours stemming from these works at the forefront of the field.

Louisa Mackenzie’s and Stephanie Posthumus’s edited collection of essays pertaining to *French Thinking about Animals* offers a compelling example of the extraordinary array of approaches

scholars have taken to the so-called 'animal question' across the humanities. In sum, the work offers an introduction to the major themes nagging at scholars of human-animal relationships and animality in the second decade of the twentieth-first century. Though divided into four key arenas of study — history, philosophy, intimacy, and environment — at its heart the collection asks whether there might be a distinctively *French* animal question which stems from a very particular humanistic tradition and a certain gastronomic culture (*foie gras*, for instance, as a luxury product founded on inhumane practices), and a political culture committed to the protection of powerful commercial interests, like those of pharmaceutical companies whose operations depend on animal testing (ix-xi). Animals have been conspicuously absent in French literary studies, at least, and this is unsurprising, notes Anne Simon, for the ethics of anthropocentrism is not as present a phenomenological issue in French intellectual circles as it is elsewhere (78-79). While the volume crafts a convincing case for the specificity of French relationships with animals, it does much more in the process by simply pointing to the fact that human social relationships with animals vary across cultures. Not only is there a French 'animal question', there is also by extension a Croatian animal question, an Estonian animal question, and a Spanish animal question, etcetera.

Beyond a concern for the specificity of French animal studies, the volume also engages with issues of relevance to the international community of academics grappling with their own animal questions. The volume engages with themes of pertinence to animal historians and scholars of animals and animality more broadly across an array of historical contexts. Peter Sahlins analyses the reception of Cartesianism through the lens of the lives and afterlives of three seventeenth-century chameleons in a nice example of non-mammalian animal histories which are, at present, sorely lacking (15-30)¹². Walter Putnam examines the colonial zoo through the 1931 Exposition Coloniale and the ensuing Vincennes zoo. In so doing, he offers a compelling addition to a burgeoning literature on zoos as well as a well-timed counter to the usual focus on large metropolitan zoos like those in London, Hamburg, Paris, and New York (31-45).¹³ Carla Freccero engages in a Queer reading of Derrida's naked encounter with *his* cat (105-20)¹⁴ while Marcela Iacub considers bestiality in the context of

what the judicial system's reading of such human-animal interactions might tell us about animals, animality and human identity (121-31).

In the process many of the essays address the character of the human-animal divide (ix). Of course, Darwin's works of 1859 and 1871 (especially) went a long way toward dissolving the perception of an ontological distinction — or dualism — between humans and the rest of the natural world.¹⁵

Nonetheless, a sense of fundamental human exceptionalism has endured in many cultures (53).

Indeed, the human/animal dualism is more problematic than it appears at first glance. Not only does it draw an artificial distinction, it also homogenises and breaks down difference. French philosopher Jacques Derrida famously criticised the notion of 'the animal' itself, noting that there is no such thing as 'animal'. The category, he observes, is made up of an astonishing diversity of living beings. The fact that a horse, a gorilla, a grasshopper, and a fruit fly are all grouped under a single umbrella term — 'animal' — denies their own specificities and relegates the entire body of animals into a single inferior 'other' in opposition to the supposedly exceptional human.¹⁶ The activist strain in animal studies is similarly addressed (xvi).

Two of the most impressive contributions in the volume — Eric Baratay's methodological meditation on how we might actually practise animal history and Dominique Lestel's analysis of the 'texture' of animality — address some of the major preoccupations of scholars of human-animal relations all over the world: the problem of animal agency. Animals are physical beings, but their material influence on the world they help to craft has been notoriously difficult to define. A recent state of the field essay argued that it was time to move beyond agency.¹⁷ This viewpoint, however, rather misses the point. The fact that animals have 'agency' or, rather, 'influence' has moved beyond doubt, at least among scholars of human-animal relations. However, the exact nature of that influence, and the ways we might work with it remain contentious for good reason: how, precisely, might humanists understand the realities of animal being? Eric Baratay takes up this question here, arguing that it is vital that we address the animals of the past as lively beings, using ethological

approaches to understand animal behaviours in historical perspective.¹⁸ Part of this, he supposes, is to pay attention to the differences between individuals (3-5). If we combine the traditional sources of the historian — documentary sources — with ethological studies, we might find ourselves arriving at a rich understanding of the role of animals in the forging of past events (6). This approach is not without its potential pitfalls: ethology is fundamentally about observations of animal behaviour in the present and thus the projection of present behaviours onto past animals makes significant assumptions about the staticity of species attributes. Nonetheless, the reading of historical sources with an eye toward locating the traces of animal behaviour often buried within them at least offers up opportunities to explore these kinds of interdisciplinary approaches. Indeed, we might find ourselves able to access what he calls ‘lived animal experience[s]’ which are embedded within historical events like the two world wars and the industrial revolution, both of which involved the labour — and suffering — of countless animals in frequently punishing conditions (7). The methodology proposed by Baratay might allow us to reconstruct animal biographies: real stories about real animals from the animal’s point of view. This is all well and good, and indeed vital to the development of the field, because an ethological approach draws the animal out from the pages of our tomes and actualises them. And yet, these kinds of approaches are nonetheless fraught with danger. As Baratay himself notes, species, groups, and individuals are constantly changing over time in response to changes in their environments (13-14). These nuances in animal behaviour are what make Baratay’s approach problematic, in my view. How exactly are we to trace and take account of these nuances across time and space, before proceeding to work with them? There are few convincing answers here.

Lestel’s piece reflects on a really compelling conceptualisation of entangled human-animal relationships in the form of Tim Ingold’s notion of the ‘meshwork’. Building on Latour’s actor-network, the idea of the meshwork illustrates the ways in which all agents in a given situation might be inextricably bound together (64).¹⁹ The allied suggestion that animality and human-animal relations are textured illustrates that relations are not only social but also cognitive and metabolic

(71). Together, Baratay's and Lestel's analyses are important contributions to the field in its effort to get to grips with the entwined realities of human-animal being in the world — messmates at table, as Donna Haraway puts it.²⁰

Thus, *Thinking French Animals* does an excellent job in bringing to light the vast array of approaches collected under the disciplinary umbrella of Animal Studies, not only in France but also across the globe, while also reflecting on some new methodologies that might assist us in our deconstruction of historical human-animal interfaces. In contrast, Deborah Amberson's and Elena Past's edited collection, *Thinking Italian Animals*, focuses in on animals in two specific but interlinked contexts: literature and film. In a similar vein to the previous volume, the editors ask what is special about Italian animal studies. The answer, they convincingly conclude, is the contributions made by Italian writers and thinkers around the nature of the human-animal ontological chasm (3). By critiquing these creative outlets, and despite the more limited scope, the writers do well to illuminate a vast array of philosophical preoccupations at the core of Animal Studies. Mimesis — imitation and representation — is the major concern of the volume's foreword. In so doing, the authors address the ways in which human attitudes towards animals shift in relation to the degrees to which we perceive similarity between us and 'them'. 'Unique and indivisible identity', they write, 'no longer the measuring stick for the world, wanes when it discovers that it is measured from the outside. The others transform it into a kaleidoscope...' (xxvi). Indeed, the author evokes Zola's 'baboon grandfather': he 'assumes the shape of a troublesome lodger, legacy of a past from which we want to be freed, but equally able to emerge from the dark depths of the human being' (xxxiii).

Philosophical attitudes towards animals are at the root of this volume and, in some respects, this reflects the deep philosophical roots of Animal Studies. Amberson, for instance, reads repulsion, affection, and pity in the human-animal relations that are the subject of Federigo Tozzi's early twentieth-century writings. His picture of animal being was indeed kaleidoscopic and his attitudes often ethically motivated. Leake, meanwhile, engages with a strand of Animal Studies that is closely

tied to feminist critiques of social relations, drawing out the associations between male/female; human/animal; and speciesism/sexism in relation to Cesare Pavese's writings (40-56; also see David del Principe, 180).²¹

Others in the volume are concerned more with the wild within — the bestial human — and this, of course, is a critical vein of Animal Studies in its consideration not only of human-animal relationships but also of conceptualisations of humanity and animality as ontological states in themselves.

Weregoats feature in Simone Castaldi's analysis of Landolfi's 'bestiary' (85), while Gilebbi meditates on the animalisation of others from Jews to slaves (100-101). According to Mecchia, the process of 'becoming', enshrined in the work of Deleuze and Guattari blurs the ontological chasm between human and more-than-human states of being.²² In much the same way, she argues, the process of 'becoming' has the capacity to break down gendered divides, and she examines this through the work of Elsa Morante (129-144). This blurring of ontological boundaries concerns Fulginiti's chapter on dystopian fiction, too (159-76).

In sum, this volume is about thresholds and the navigation of the waters between states of being.

There is, however, a certain lack of materiality across these pieces, but then they are all unapologetically literary and film criticism rather than animal histories *per se*. Having said that, some of the major insights of the text are tested in historical contexts from World War Two to the Holocaust and the depiction of the 'deplorable humanity' on show in the German concentration camps and the gulags of the Soviet Union (62, 120).

This is where Boria Sax steps in with his *Animals in the Third Reich*. The danger in Animal Studies is that animals themselves get lost beneath an ever-thickening hide of theorisation. Sax's examination of animals in the Third Reich applies many of the ideas enshrined in the two volumes reviewed above. The Third Reich has been studied in not unsurprising depth. Given this intensity Sax must be applauded for seeking new ways of understanding this tumultuous period in Germany's and Europe's broader history. Through an examination of animals and animality Sax exposes many of the

ways in which animal histories deepen our understanding of the Nazi state, its major figures, the imagination of its composite peoples, and the perpetration of the Holocaust itself. Indeed, at the heart of this book is Sax's proposition that nature was seen as a moral and behavioural template for the Reich. Rather like it was across a range of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writings Nature was viewed as *both* a 'vast and amoral power' as well as a 'source of bucolic peace'. A 'back to the land' philosophy merged with a desire to replicate the savagery of nature in the destruction of bloodlines; nature was the template for survival (157).²³ As beings *of nature* animals and animality thus featured in a multitude of ways in the function and ideology of the Nazi state.

Divided into three main sections, Sax's monograph considers animals in the contexts of the construction of race, the function of the state, and in the mechanics and the rituals of slaughter and extermination. Over the course of his analysis Sax engages with many of the major questions posed by Animal Studies scholars. Not least, animals as social constructions — as totems — loom large. Nazi ideology was saturated with animal imagery and, in the process, animals came to characterise whole social groups. Historically, Western cultures have tended to consider animals in terms of their place in a hierarchy of being ascending upwards to the apex of creation where humans sat just below God and angelic beings. Some favoured species denoted what were considered to be positive characteristics like pride, tenacity, cunning (i.e. the wolf), while others — namely vermin — have symbolised transgression, if not outright antagonism towards the masterful, exceptional, blessed human being.²⁴ Accordingly, an entire spectrum of characterisations rooted in prevailing attitudes towards various species existed in the Third Reich. Sax succinctly marries animal symbolisms with ethical practices on the ground and, in so doing, presents some of the major paradoxes at the heart of the book. The wolf, for instance, was glorified. Yet, alongside this Nietzschean celebration of savagery, there was a general anti-predator sentiment through which the practice of meat eating was presented as a profound defect in the fabric of the universe (12-20; 64).

At the heart of this attachment of animal characteristics to human groups was an unstable faith in human-animal distinction, which also features in Sax's consideration of the 'beast within' (72-75). In some Western cultures, the borderlands between humans and animals have historically been seen as stratified, ascending from ape to human. Sax tells us how Jewish people were considered to be ape-like in nature, at a lesser state of civility than the 'human' others in their midst (38-45). Jews were also contextualised in accordance with the cultural meanings attached to other animals. As symbols of brutality, pigs were one such species equated with Jewish people (55-61), as were rats due to the association of Jews with vermin (149-50) and sheep, conjuring images of the age-old contest between wolves (Aryans) and their prey in the grand battlefield of nature (66-69).

As well as the consideration of animal imagery, Sax also effectively relates an animal history of the Third Reich that rested upon the physical lives of individual, fleshy, bloody creatures. He explains how dogs went to war on the Eastern front in the early 1940s (76), while also describing their deployment in concentration camps to attack prisoners for 'entertainment' (77) and the ways in which warhorses were exploited en masse (86). Such insights represent a valuable contribution to a developing animal and environmental history of warfare.²⁵ Beyond the realms of open hostilities, the realities of sentimental human-animal interfaces are also considered here — not least in the intimacies between Hitler and his various dogs, most notably Blondi who lived with him from 1941 until his death in the infamous Berlin bunker where his 'master' ended his life at the climax of war in Europe (78).

All of this aside, it is actually the latter part of the work that presents the really innovative material. Sax's analysis of animal protection laws — introduced in 1933 — alongside the continued practice of animal testing reveals one shade of a profound hypocrisy at the heart of the Nazi state. Sax convincingly argues that the Nazi emphasis on 'hardness' and on brutality in so many of its encounters with human others sits at odds with the 'extreme' form of humane concern it directed towards many — though not all — animals. It might seem difficult to believe that nobody at the time

was apparently aware of that contradiction (103). Yet it is not necessarily as strange as it sounds, for not only are human-animal relationships in both the past and present founded upon contradiction but also the treatment of animals in cultures all over the world has never necessarily corresponded to their treatment of the humans in their midst.

Likewise, Sax's focus on what he calls the 'cult of death' presents genuine food for thought. The Nazi attack on kosher slaughter not only restricted Jewish peoples' ability to practice a custom at the heart of their tradition, but it also directly equated Judaism with supposedly inhumane, degenerate practices. In the process, the dominant status of Jews as *untersmenschen* was solidified (132-39). At the outset, Sax also notes a key concern among Animal Studies scholars: the challenge of drawing parallels between human and animal suffering. Marjorie Spiegel called this 'the dreaded comparison'.²⁶ It is certainly 'dreaded', for evaluations of the Holocaust (and, of course, many would have it that there are no, and cannot be any, comparisons with the Holocaust for it is an event which sits outside of history²⁷) with mass animal slaughter risk trivialising the magnitude of human suffering as well as demeaning events at the heart of modern Jewish identity (6). Nonetheless, animals and animality remain worthy subjects of historical analysis and, in some respects, are important points of comparison. Sax takes issue with Raul Hilberg's contention that the concentration camp had no precedent, for instance. Instead, he argues, both the industrial slaughterhouse and the concentration camp were predicated on the mass mechanised production of death (138; 156).²⁸ This is, I think, an important, though hardly novel, critique: it has been a parallel evoked - not only by those concerned for animal welfare - for many decades now. Mass slaughter and the suffering it produces sits at the heart of both captive institutions, and drawing parallels — sensitively — serves an important purpose in drawing our attention not only to the institutions and embodiments of suffering but also to the bloody realities of both human-animal and human-human engagements in modernity.

Despite all of this, however, there are points where real animals feel curiously absent from Sax's critique, instead remaining obscured behind their cultural representations. The recent materialist turn within Animal Histories suggests that there may be scope for expansion upon Sax's findings. How did animals feature in Jewish peoples' experience of the Holocaust, for instance? In the light of Tim Cole's and Suzanne Weiner Weber's fairly recent expositions of Jewish life in the forests of Eastern Europe in the early 1940s, the role of domesticated dogs and wild animals in crafting a multi-species space might be joined by analyses of the role of rats in the barracks, or the experience of being infested with lice.²⁹ What kinds of animals lived alongside Jews in the ghettos, what wildlife rolled past as transportees looked on through the miniscule peep holes of the cattle cars? Jewish experience of animals and — indeed, of animality — presents a rich vein of potential historical inquiry in the light of Sax's opening up of the possibilities afforded by animal history approaches to the study of Europe's darkest moments.

In contrast, Frank Westerman's *Brother Mendel's Perfect Horse* presents an animal history of a very different shade. Far more focussed on the material realities of equine life in Europe across the centuries, the piece specifically tracks the author's discovery of Lipizzaner history from around the turn of the twentieth century. This story of a remarkably illustrious breed is, at its heart, quite tragic. The oldest horse breed in Europe (c. 1580), the Lipizzaner horses were the favoured equine of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The initial herd was around 1,000 animals strong and represented 'power, grace, loyalty and eagerness to learn' (20, 34). Across generations, animals were selectively bred not only because their bodies looked magnificent but also because their characters were deemed to be outstanding, too (27). Over time, conflict dispersed and depleted their numbers. Most recently, Lipizzaners were massacred and dumped in mass graves during the violent fragmentation of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Before that, however, they were marched across vast distances, experimented upon by Nazis and Communists, used as beasts of burden at Auschwitz (which also functioned as a stud farm for the breed). In the process they dispersed across Europe and their numbers dramatically reduced as they were exploited in human conflicts and their tender bodies

served up to ravenous soldiers. As Westerman traces this history of dislocation and depletion, he encounters people and animals who were entangled in a rich multispecies fabric. As an acquaintance says to him at the outset, ‘when you touch a Lipizzaner ... you’re touching history’ (21). Throughout the pages of Westerman’s investigation these animals bring the histories of individual animals, the story of the breed, and the people who cared for and/or exploited them to life.

This work represents an important example of the opportunities presented by animal history, though it must be said that the journalistic status of Westerman’s work frees it from some of the disciplinary constraints that limit the methodological flexibility of most academic historians. Indeed, he does exactly as Baratay advises in his aforementioned piece in *French Thinking about Animals*. There is something palpable about the animals encountered and evoked in the pursuit of Lipizzaner history. These historical ‘actors’ really are *living* beings bound into experiential relationships with humans. For instance, the multisensory nature of the beasts and their environments is repeatedly recounted, evoking for the reader an appreciation of a rich sensorium: ‘I could smell the penetrating odour of horse’, he notes. Later he recalls the ‘leather and beeswax’ of the saddlery’ (14-19, 37). He could ‘feel every movement of his shoulder blades’ and, in the act of riding, he noticed that the world looked rather different (17). As the narrative trots back and forth between the past and Westerman’s present (as he continues his investigation), he is able to evoke a genuinely compelling sense of past and present horse-ness. They almost gallop off the page before us as lively actors in a rich historical world.

Beyond the evocation of human-animal encounter, however, Westerman’s story of the Lipizzaner is deployed as a lens through which to engage with wider themes around blood. Not only does violence pervade the narrative, but also does the science — or rather the evolution of the science — of eugenics. The father of genetic sciences, George Mendel, looms large, particularly in one section dedicated to the many breeding experiments to which Lipizzaner horses were subjected under Nazi and Communist regimes. In the process, equine lives are framed in the context of the Nazi desire to

breed 'better' humans (113-142). Dispersed across Europe after the end of the Second World War, some of the animals ended up in the Balkans. The Yugoslav wars provide a similarly compelling context within which the nature of the breed is discussed, especially in the light of the ethnic and nationalist incongruences of the Yugoslav state which were called to the surface from the 1980s, especially (225). Indeed, it is here that the traumatic histories of humans and animals collide most powerfully. Mass graves were used to conceal the bodies of Bosniaks after the massacre at Srebrenica in 1991. Similarly, vast numbers of Lipizzaner horses were slaughtered and pushed into the earth. Thirteen equine cadavers were hoisted from the ground near the hamlet of Filipovac in 1992, for instance. Post-mortems concluded that some had died from shrapnel wounds, others from bullets, and more by smoke inhalation (272-80). These thirteen horses joined the human victims of a devastating conflict that tore the multi-ethnic Yugoslav state apart.

Ranging across the continent, this work embraces ideas at the heart of animal history, most notably that animals are both real and imagined, that they can impact on historical events, that they can be impacted upon, and that they can occupy our minds in a multiplicity of ways. They feature in the contexts of war, in discourse relating to race and blood, and in the contexts of intimate interspecies relationships. Westerman's investigation is a success in terms of the ground it covers. However, it is perhaps his methodological approach that sets the work apart as a piece pointing the *ideal* way (in my view) forward for animal historians. So many traditional historical sources are entirely devoid of animals; or, where they do feature, they are present as dislocated fragments. Working with these kinds of sources in isolation can sometimes craft a rather superficial history of human-animal relationship. And yet so many interspecies relationships are sited in deep emotional waters. Oral histories and interviews like those conducted by Westerman present compelling ways through which historians might begin to access the historical realities of human-animal intimacies. One interviewee leaned into Westerman, pointedly noting that 'you're lucky I'm still alive. Once I'm gone there's no-one else who could tell you these stories first-hand' (139, also 192). It's true; only by getting at the minds of people past and present might we begin to summon the realities of human-animal being in

a rich multispecies past. The sentiment that when you touch an animal you are touching history (21) is a powerful one. In many ways this is exactly what animal historians have been saying for nearly thirty years now.

A number of avenues for future research present themselves across the four books reviewed here. Not least, much of what is here relates to mammals. A more-than-mammalian history is sorely needed if animal historians are not to pander to the very speciesist hierarchies that we often critique. Beyond this, the relationships between the individual and the species needs further attention — though Westerman's work does well to alternate between the two in his discussion of the Lipizzaner breed as well as the individual horses he encounters along the way. Finally, as we've seen, Boria Sax addresses the so-called dreaded comparison: while there may not be a pressing need to perpetuate such comparisons, there might well be a scholarly imperative to investigate the physical presences of animals in horrifying events. What might an animal history of the Holocaust look like? Or an animal history of the Balkan wars? Each of these events takes place not only in time, but also in a diversity of environments inhabited by human and more-than-human others.

All of these works show, I think, that animals and humans do exist in the kind of 'meshwork' considered in Lestel's piece, where both animals and the humans with whom they relate(d) are textured beasts, multifaceted and complex.³⁰ An armoury of interpretative and methodological frameworks is needed in order to summon the beast from its boudoir. Florence Burgat argues that people tend to speak of 'the animal' in order to 'forget all animals' (49). I am not sure this is completely true, but she nonetheless raises the important point that 'the animal' often simplifies when, and as these four works show, 'the animal' and animals are complex indeed. Let us rise to the challenge laid down by Eric Baratay: we must strive toward accessing lived animal experience so that the animals we evoke in our European animal tales reflect the richly multi-layered and multispecies world of our pasts and presents.

¹ 'Canis Lupus', available at <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/3746/0> [last visited 23 August 2016].

² L. Boitani, 'Wolf Conservation and Recovery', in *Wolves: Behavior, ecology and conservation*, eds. L. D. Mech, and L. Boitani (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 317–40. For wider scholarship on post-war rural nostalgia, see Henri Mendras, *Fin des Paysans: Innovations et changement dans le agriculture française* (Paris, 1967).

³ Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983); Peter Singer *Animal Liberation* (London: Cape, 1975).

⁴ Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French Cultural History* (London: Allan Lane, 1984); E. P. Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals* (London: W. Heinemann, 1906). Also see A. Radclyffe Dugmore, *The Romance of the Beaver: Being the History of the Beaver in the Western Hemisphere* (London: Heinemann, 1914) and James Ritchie, *The Influences of Man on Animal Life in Scotland: A Study in Faunal Evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920).

⁵ Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987). Ritvo has continued to shape the field in the years since: Harriet Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid and other Figments of the Classifying Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Harriet Ritvo, 'Animal Planet', *Environmental History*, 9:2 (2004), 204–20; Harriet Ritvo, 'Among Animals', *Environment and History*, 20 (2014): 491–98.

⁶ Claude Levi-Strauss, *Totemism*, trans. by Rodney Needham (Uckfield: Beacon Press, 1963); Linda Kalof and Brigitte Resl (general editors), *A Cultural History of Animals* (Oxford: Berg, 2007, 6 volumes); Kathleen Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Pet-keeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994); Louise Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots: Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

⁷ Plenty of recent works do an excellent job engaging with the real animal. Indeed, in many works the lives of animals are rendered visceral: Laurel Braitman, *Animal Madness: How Anxious Dogs, Compulsive Parrots, and Elephants in Recovery help us Understand Ourselves* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014); Jon Coleman, *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Jason Hribal, *Fear of the Animal Planet: The Hidden History of Animal Resistance* (Oakland: AK Press, 2010); Alan Mikhail, *The Animal in Ottoman Egypt* (New York: Oxford, 2014); Ryan Tucker Jones, 'Running into Whales: The History of the North Pacific from Below the Waves', *The American Historical Review*, 118.2, (2013) 349-77 .

⁸ Val Plumwood, 'Being Prey' <<http://valplumwood.com/2008/03/08/being-prey/>> (2000); Ritvo, *Platypus*; Brett L. Walker, 'Animals and the Intimacy of History', *History & Theory*, 52.4 (2013), 45–67

⁹ Recent works of note include Andrew Flack, 'In Sight, Insane: Animal Agency, Captivity and the Frozen Wilderness in the late Twentieth Century', *Environment and History*, 22.4 (2016); and Chris Pearson, 'Between Instinct and Intelligence: Harnessing Police Dog Agency in Early Twentieth-Century Paris', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 58.2 (2016), 463-90. Many of these works have been founded on insights drawn from the social sciences: Karen Barad, 'Agential Realism: Feminist Interventions in Understanding Scientific Practices', in *The Science Studies Reader*, ed. by Mario Biagioli (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 1-11; Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For an excellent delineation of these very recent innovations see Joshua Specht, 'Animal History after its Triumph: Unexpected Animals, Evolutionary Approaches, and the Animal Lens', *History Compass*, 14.7 (2016), 326-36.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain since 1800* (London: Reaktion, 1998).

¹¹ See the following journals: *Society & Animals*, *Critical Animal Studies*, *Anthrozoos*.

¹² Samuel J. M. M. Alberti (ed.), *The Afterlives of Animals: A Museum Menagerie* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011); Jamie Lorimer, 'Nonhuman charisma: which species trigger our emotions and why?' *ECOS*, 27:1 (2006): 20-7. For a fascinating exception see Junko Thérèse Takeda, 'Global Insects: silkworms, sericulture, and statecraft in Napoleonic France and Tokugawa Japan', *French History*, 28.2 (2014), 207-25.

¹³ On zoos, see for instance: Elizabeth Hanson, *Animal Attractions: Nature on Display in American Zoos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Ian Jared Miller, *The Nature of the Beasts: Empire and Exhibition at the Tokyo Imperial Zoo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Nigel Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, 'The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)', *Critical Inquiry*, 28:2 (2002), 369-418.

¹⁵ Charles R. Darwin, *On the Origin of the Species, by means of natural selection: or, the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life* (London: John Murray, 1859); Charles R. Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and selection in relation to sex* (London: John Murray, 1871).

¹⁶ Derrida, 'Animal'. Also see Erica Fudge, *Animal* (London: Reaktion, 2002).

¹⁷ Specht, 'Animal History after its Triumph'.

¹⁸ See the follow for examples of multispecies ethnographies: S. Eben Kirksey and Stefan Helmreich, 'The emergence of interspecies ethnography', *Cultural Anthropology*, 24:4 (2010): 545-76; Agustín Fuetes, 'Natural cultural encounters in Bali: Monkeys, temples, tourists, and ethnoprimateology', *Cultural Anthropology*, 24:4 (2010): 600-24.

¹⁹ Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007);)Latour, *Reassembling the Social*.

²⁰ Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

²¹ Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan (eds.), *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995); Jody Emel, 'Are you man enough, big and bad enough? Ecofeminism and Wolf Eradication in the USA', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 13 (1995), 707-35; Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).

²² Felix Deleauze and Gilles Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

²³ See writings of French anarchists, for instance: Louise Michel, *Mémoires tome I* (Paris, 1886), Chapter 9, and Fernand Pelloutier and Maurice Pelloutier, *La vie ouvrière en France* (Paris: Schleicher frères, 1900), Chapter 10.

²⁴ The different cultural perceptions of a whole host of species have been considered in the Reaktion series of *Animal* books. There are also a few works that specifically deal with the notion of a hierarchy of being. See, for instance: Jane C. Desmond, *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

²⁵ See, for instance: Chris Pearson, *Mobilizing Nature: The Environmental History of War and Militarization in Modern France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

²⁶ Marjorie Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* (London: Heretic, 1988).

²⁷ There is, of course, an on-going scholarly conversation about whether or not the Holocaust can be judged to be 'outside' of history. See Omer Bartov, 'Seeking the Roots of Modern Genocide: On the Macro- and Microhistory of Mass Murder,' in Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (eds.) *The Specter of Genocide: Man Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, CUP, 2003), 75-96; and Yehuda Bauer, *On the Holocaust and Other Genocides*, USHMM 2006.

²⁸ Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), Volume 3.

²⁹ Tim Cole, "'Nature was Helping Us': Forests, Trees and Environmental Histories of the Holocaust', *Environmental History* 19.4 (2014): 665-86; Suzanne W. Weber, 'The forest as a liminal space: a transformation of cultural norms during the Holocaust', *Holocaust Studies*, 14.1 (2008), 35-60.

³⁰ Lestel, in Louisa Mackenzie and Stephanie Posthumus (eds.) *French Thinking about Animals* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2015), 65-71.